

# Kate Atlee Rider Diary



*Fi Pleasure aka Tresure*



The Winter Championships held at Solihull have been and gone, and By Jove were the big boys (and girls) out in full force! Mum made me chuckle because she reminded me that five years ago the competition at the Winter Championships were no match for the Summer Championships, but this certainly does not hold true now. (Must be all those new indoor arenas, enticing more people to compete through the ghastly weather!)

The standard of horses improves every year and the winners were pretty phenomenal. I had a busy Winter Championships which was great. Stein my youngster qualified for the open Elementary. I qualified Limiro, owned by Julie Daley for the open Medium and qualified Lochness owned by Sarah Outwin, in the open Medium and Advanced Medium.

The preparation for Stein was not exactly ideal. The silly chap went and pratted in the field, successfully

pulling a muscle in his shoulder two weeks before his big day. After having the initial foot stomping and dog kicking (only joking) I decided that the best course of action would be rest, so he had two weeks of really gentle Pessoa-ing and hacking in the hopes that it would be better in time. Three days before the competition I schooled him for 15 minutes and he felt ok. Hence forthwith I schooled him for the remaining two days and had to make a decision!

I figured that because he was only young and that I have high hopes for him as my future top horse, he needed to go to the Winters to experience the atmosphere and spooky goings-on.

Luckily my plan worked because he behaved like an angel and he warmed up fantastically. Unluckily it didn't work because the lack of preparation meant he wasn't too sure about where the hell he was meant to be going, and how, so we ended up doing a total of five flying changes. In an Elementary. Bless him; at least I know that we're able to do the hard stuff!

Lochness was so excited to be at such an important competition! He came out like a super-trooper for the Advanced Medium and did the most expressive flying changes on the mark which was fantastic! Having regained his composure for the next day he did a really fluent Medium test and got some top marks.

Limiro warmed up like a real pro and tried the most he's ever tried, so I

was obviously really thrilled with him. I think the brain power may have been a little too much for the poor chap because he's been asleep for the past two days!

My plan now is to get Stein qualified for Elementary and Medium Summer Regional Championships. Lochness won the warm-up test for the Winter Championships so he's qualified for the Advanced Medium Summer Regionals. I'm also really keen to have a crack at some Prix St George to music on him. Sarah is on the case for the music.

Fi Pleasure is really coming on well at home, so I'm looking forward to competing him at Prix St George this season, with Grand Prix next year.....fingers crossed! He hasn't competed for a year because I've really focused on his training and I fear there may be fireworks on our first outing!

Andy B Bedding has very kindly agreed to sponsor me some free bedding for my horses. Jess (stable manager, counsellor, sorter-outerer) and I got very excited about trying out the new cardboard bedding. Jess wasn't sure about it to start with but having got the hang of mucking it out, thinks it's absolutely fabulous and I definitely agree!

It is lightweight and super absorbent but the best part is that it doesn't smell and is so much more hygienic. We will never go back to stinky bedding; cardboard is the way forward, and Andy's is dust free!

## KEVIN SPARROW PHOTOGRAPHY

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